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Interior architecture demand trends all about having control

According to architect Steven Kratchman, AIA, the top 2007 "demand trends" for urban interior architecture are: (1) Acoustical Controls (of sound, of course), (2) Remote or Internet Controls (of nearly everything) (3) The Adaptable Room (flexible spaces that aren't necessarily defined by "four walls and a door") and (4) Combining apartments — up, down and sideways.

These lifestyle design preferences often affect residential purchases, interior design concepts or architecture decisions, which is why we call them "demand trends." 1. Acoustical controls, such as acoustical control of sound from the exterior through windows and lessening of sound from contiguous apartments, below and adjacent; new foam interlayers under flooring and between walls; spring isolators on mechanical and fitness equipment; new-technology drywall with improved acoustical performance; appliances with variable speeds and lower decibel levels and energy-saving, and, triple-glazed, three-pane, sound-insulating glass window panels.

2. Servers for technology systems, including web-based Creston technology, for remote/Internet control of drapes, lights, media and entertainment centers, and interior security. What people may have experienced in their work environment, they now want in their homes. This trend of residential web-based tech control and monitoring systems, which can easily be up to ten percent of a home design, re-design or renovation budget and up to an additional \$10-per-square-foot, indicates the increasing workplace-

to-home crossover of technology and the blurring of the line between office and home.

3. Expandable spaces that can be open and closed, or enlarged, by moving panels, etc., for different activities or lifestyle functions. There is a renewed interest in the tools and techniques that architects have long used to make spaces more multi-use, expandable and flexible. We're seeing increased demand for pocket doors, sliding doors and barn doors, as well as glass doors which can be changed from translucent to transparent with the flick of a switch. Also, rolling, coiling doors that disappear into the ceiling or garage-type doors with panels that lift up, as well as folding partitions and accordion doors. These "special door" types make it possible to have a single space with two or more functions. The result? Areas, rather than rooms, defined by something other than four full-height walls and a door; areas or spaces suggested by partial-height and partial-length walls; and, use of glass and other transparent materials in lieu of some walls.

4. Combining apartments is a request from many who prefer to "stay put" rather than move, if they combine their current apartment with another nearby apartment — up, down or sideways. This is generally true of what I would call "captive sellers," who like their building, their neighborhood and their current apartment. By adding on to an adjacent apartment, they are typically willing to make some design compromises, adaptations and modifications, and work with what's actually available in order to increase their available square footage. ■